

THE OUTRAGE IN JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI.

From the beginning of the world, since the plan of redemption was communicated from heaven to man, the righteous have, almost unceasingly been persecuted. But persecution is not a heavenly principle; it was never inculcated by the inspiration of God; it never emanated from him; but must have come from the prince of darkness; and can never find countenance except in his followers. However many may have been persecuted for their religion, and whether they were really the righteous followers of Christ, being founded upon the true principles of his gospel, we shall not here go into a lengthy discussion of this point; but that we can say, that whether the persecuted were righteous or unrighteous, the persecutors were actuated by the spirit of antichrist, and of course they were not the children of God. How long was it from the time that the system of salvation was communicated to Cain and Abel, before Abel, because he was righteous was slain by the hand of his brother? And why was he angry with Abel? because Abel was righteous, and he himself was not. A strange emotion has almost invariably pervaded the minds of men—a wild desire to seek the blood of the innocent. What urges men on to the commission of such inhuman acts? Is it a liberal spirit which seeks the blood of innocence? Is it a kind, humane, disposition that prompts men to slay, or drive from the face of society their fellow creatures, to wander in solitude and seek a refuge for life in wildernesses and in mountains? Is this the religion which God has given men to prepare them for a mansion on his own right hand, in his glory, which consists in butchery and rapine? Did the apostles and primitive saints ever recommend such an order of things as this? Did the Lord Jesus in all his communications from heaven to earth ever command it? No! Who does, or ever did? POPES and PRIESTS! followed by a gang of obsequious wretches, who, if they ever had any respect or reverence for the divine Majesty, or a just sense of a reward for every act of violence committed upon their species, have lost it by the vain flatteries of such individuals as teach that, to expel a heretic, or massacre such as do not yield to their oppressive hand, is no crime; but a certain expiation for the blackest deed, and a sure means of obtaining the rich rewards of the kingdom of heaven! It is in vain to deny that this has not been the case century after century. The horrid scenes acted by the inquisition of men, (or demons, we might more properly say,) who have professed holiness, is sufficient to shock the senses of every feeling man. The forms and plans for torturing *schismatics*, (as the Pagans used to designate the followers of Christ,) and *heretics*, (as the Catholics are pleased to call all who do not worship as the followers of the "Whore of Babylon.") must have caused the angels to blush, and the heavens to weep! But with all their boast of religion, those who have professed to be the followers of the Lamb of God, have approached nearer the purposes of the father of lies in inventing torments for their victims, than the

Pagans. Witness the horrors of the Inquisition; or as the Catholics call it, "The holy office," or as others call it, "The holy apostolical court of inquisition," and see men accused without a crime, and condemned and put to the rack without a witness! See their goods and estates confiscated, and the money put into the coffers of the subjects of demons, called *perks* and *rancors*! See mothers deprived of their infants, and children left orphans! See cities and provinces depopulated by the express command of those who profess to be infallible; and witness at the same time a ruthless soldiery trample down the helpless and defile the virtuous! Notice the flow of blood from the cruelty of Herod of Judea, to Pope Sylvester, and from his time to the outrage in Jackson county, Missouri, and ask, Is this the religion of heaven, which teaches men to array the strong against the weak, and put to the torture men who do not believe the popular creed? Did God ever give to men the power to compel their fellow beings to believe contrary to their own minds, by putting into operation a system of cruelty, where the most shocking excesses of torments were inflicted, to cause them so to do? For a moment witness the self-righteous and hypocritical fiends, clothed with the (pretended) garments of the sanctuary, professing to be the shepherds of the Lord's flock, exulting in the afflictions and pains of men, who were made to suffer for no other reason than a disbelief in the popular creed: see them scoff at the groans of misery, and witness them turn a deaf ear to the cries of helpless innocents; see them walk over the ashes of the dwellings of their victims, and see them laugh at their calamity; see them trample upon the wounded and dying, while they wade through blood, and stain their (sacerdotal) garments with the same; and ask, Can such men inherit the celestial glory? Do such men hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven? Have they power to fasten the manacles of glory against those whom they persecute? If they have, may heaven grant that we may not enter with them; for we have no desire to be locked into a habitation with such blood-drenched monsters! God never gave so bloody a picture to his creatures, and called it his order to prepare them to inherit his rest. He never communicated such for gospel principles, nor has on record that such persons should have a place on his right hand in his glory. It is the intervention of those who love the glory of the world better than the pure riches of heaven, who come from such individuals to stain the souls of the souls of men, to gratify a vain and wicked ambition, and render a cloak of sanctity fill up the cup of their own iniquity, sporting with the doctrines of the gospel, to carry on their own schemes of murder and barbarity, all God takes them from this stage of action to deceive men no more. Can such be the religion of heaven? No; the very reverse; for had all men that religion no acts of cruelty or violence would be committed; no blood would stain the earth; shed to gratify the ambition of tyrants and priests! No wars would fill our hearts with sorrow, nor the cry of helpless innocents ascend to the heavens for vengeance.

on the perpetrators of such crimes! No ambitious, hypocritical *pretended* doctors of divinity, would ride over the ruins of men in gilded coaches, to lord it over God's heritage! But every man would be on a level with his fellow-man, the great adversary of righteousness who leads men to destruction, would then be bound; the holy choir who now rejoice in heaven, would mingle praises with the saints below, and the earth would rest.

In past ages, few were privileged with reading the holy scriptures: the art of printing was not then known among men; and the poor, the low, and indeed, we might say, many who professed to be teachers of the gospel, scarce knew a syllable of that book now called the bible. It has ever been the policy of tyrants and despots to keep their subjects in ignorance, the more easily to effect their purposes. The popes and priests of the Romish church have sought, (more particularly perhaps in former days,) to keep the true knowledge of the word of God from their flocks; at the same time assuming the privilege of teaching its meaning, strenuously inculcating, that it was dangerous for the common people to think for themselves. And instead of teaching their congregations the doctrine of the bible, they have taught them a long round of whims and fabulous traditions, the decrees of popes and councils; the ridiculous worship of images; the celebration of mass; the prayers and intercessions for the relief of the souls of the dead from purgatory; the invoking the virgin Mary and other departed saints; the suffering of penance for sins; and one thing as strenuously as all, that they themselves were infallible, that they were invested with the power and authority of the apostles; yes, more than the apostles: because the apostles never claimed the authority of crowning, and of dethroning earthly princes; of regulating the affairs of empires, and of offering pardon for the most atrocious crimes, in the name of the Most High, to all who should take up arms and assist in the extirpation of *heretics*—and the popes have. But in this age, and more especially in countries where the word of God may be had freely by all classes of men, we are surprised at the ignorance of many on the subject of religion. How is it possible that any can suppose, that religion consists in despising men for any belief whatever, is unaccountable, unless we have in our country a set of creatures who are led blindfold by ambitious priests, who regard nothing but their own personal aggrandizement, and live without the fear of God before their eyes. From our own observation, we doubt not that there are such in our own beloved country, and may heaven grant that their numbers may be few: for religion consists in doing good, and not in doing evil; and the scripture is plain, that that which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is, To visit the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world. If then, this is the acceptable religion in the sight of heaven, how is it that men can have the hardihood to make a profession of it, and instead of visiting and relieving the wants of the widow and the fatherless, seek the destruction of fathers; and when that is effected, drive the helpless to perish in the open air without food or rai-

ment! Is heaven filled with such a religion as this? to persecute and destroy! If so, may we be delivered from it here and hereafter; for our hearts revolt at this system, and so would every man's if he had but one feeling of sympathy. But this is not so; such precepts are not contained in the gospel, to persecute men for their belief, deprive them of the goods of this life, and expose their widows and children to death. Men degrade themselves by their actions, and bring upon their own heads the judgments of the Almighty; yet they have, notwithstanding this, the privilege of believing in whatever system they choose, and heaven has never given to another man to say that they shall not enjoy this privilege, and act according to the dictates and influences of their own consciences. Why is a man to be despised for any belief whatever so long as he conducts himself with propriety, as a citizen? Suppose him to be a Musselman, shall he be despised on the account of it? It is only his belief that we may discard, not the individual, who has never harmed any man; because he is also a man, and has his own way of believing, which to him, no doubt is as near as our own to us.—It is not the Catholic that we despise, it is only that we do not fellowship him in his belief; believing it to be incorrect according to the written word of God; and so we might say of every other sect who do not think as we do; and when this is said, all is said with us: they have a right to enjoy the blessings of their belief without molestation from us or any one else: It is what heaven gave to them; they may enjoy it. It is what heaven gave to us just as freely, and we shall enjoy it also. If our neighbor is more righteous than ourselves, we rejoice because of his righteousness: we seek not his destruction because of it. If he is not as righteous as we are, we are sorry: it is our privilege to persuade him to be better; and if we can persuade him so to be, we rejoice; but if not, we judge him not, neither do we persecute him, nor threaten his life because he does not believe as we do; for this would not be the religion of heaven. Men cannot be forced into religion: their bodies may be bent, but their minds are their own: that intelligence is the gift of God, and when once it discovers an additional ray, it cannot be chained, it cannot be brought into subjection to a lesser power of intelligence: for it soars above it: when once turned to hate a system, force will only cause it to detest it the more, if used to cause it to receive it again. The body may be racked upon the wheel till each joint is dislocated: it may be confined in dungeons and solitary cells, yet the conscience cannot be bent—it may be consumed in the pan, or by the fagot, and yet, "*mens inextincta manet*." It is the height of folly to undertake to destroy any system of religion, be it ever so fallacious, or contrary to that which has been revealed from heaven, by persecution. The sword has not the power over the conscience, nor the fagot over the mind: it has been effectually tried in past ages; and from the ashes of the martyr who is slain to-day, an army may rise to-morrow, break the tyrant's chain, and defy his power.

Our readers will have noticed in former numbers of the Star, many items purporting to be facts relative to the shameful outrage

in Jackson county, Missouri, and they may remain assured, that nothing has been exaggerated by us relative to that subject. If doubts remain upon the mind with regard to this event, they may ask, where, now, are those inhabitants who settled peaceably in Jackson county, upon lands which they purchased of the Government and of individuals? Are they not driven from their homes by a lawless band of ruffians, who have defied the power of the civil law? Witness the desolate homes, raised by the industrious hands of lawful citizens: see the once fertile fields covered with crops which their economy and industry had prepared for their support, now lie open and waste to be destroyed by beasts, unless these murderers have seized upon the same for their own aggrandizement: and ask, why have these people fled, and what is the cause of this destruction and desolation? If they were disturbers of the public peace; if they were obnoxious to society, where are the records of legal courts to demonstrate the fact?

As we previously promised in a former number of the Star, that we should give the names of certain individuals concerned in this outrage, we give the following in this, with a statement of their standing and profession, &c. and shall continue in subsequent numbers to relate the acts of the leading characters of the mob, generally, as our limits and knowledge may enable us, with such remarks as the enormity of an outrage of this magnitude, in a republican Government, shall be thought appropriate.

S. D. Lucas, Colonel, one of the Judges of the county court, and a professor of religion, a *Presbyterian* who had taken a solemn oath to act according to law, and preserve inviolate the constitution, signed an article which we have heretofore published, and which we have called the *secret constitution of the Jackson county mob*, which says, "The arm of the civil law does not afford us a guarantee, or at least a sufficient one," &c. What an honorable man! what a fine citizen! what an impartial magistrate he must be! how firm his mind must be in the cause of justice! what a veneration he must have for the laws of his country! what a WASHINGTON he would have made! what a worthy member of society! what a heroic and patriotic nation ours would be were it composed of such men! what a fit subject to inherit—what! not the kingdom of God! Such monsters betrayed, led to the cross, and slew the Lord Jesus Christ! Such infernal-influenced beings martyred the ancient saints, and marked their own course with the blood of innocent men! Robert Fristoe, a Judge of the county court, a member of the Baptist church, also signed the same writing, was present and assisted in conducting our six friends, of whom we have had occasion to mention, up to the slaughter, (except they would deny the fact, or agree to leave the county,) on the 23d of July last. How holily and majestic he must have walked by the side of these men; how beautifully he must have adorned his high and holy calling, being a professed follower of the meek and lowly Lamb, in assisting to destroy men who had never harmed an individual nor violated the laws of their country! A man whose profession teaches to relieve the wants of the afflicted; to visit the widow and fatherless, was now engaged, yes, had bound himself to

assist in making widows and orphans, and then drive them from their homes to perdition! Where was his oath, or where was his profession? His oath was violated, and his profession as a Christian was lost in his wicked desire to destroy men who did not believe as he did. Samuel C. Owens, Clerk of the court, (and if we mistake not one of the number who composed the delegation at the time the constitution of the state of Missouri was framed,) was also engaged in this same tragedy, and signed his name to the same instrument, binding himself to expel, to the sacrifice of his "property and bodily powers," peaceable citizens from their homes. Owens has been a clerk in the Legislature of that state during, if we mistake not several sessions. What an honor this must reflect upon his character! What a worthy legislator, and how peculiarly well qualified to assist in framing an instrument which reads like the following: "That no human authority can control or interfere with the rights of conscience; that no person can ever be hurt, molested, or restrained in his religious profession." See the constitution of the state of Missouri, which Owens had sworn to defend, (not break,) and ask, whether this will not be an evidence to the rising generation, that we were first marching into *reform*—John Smith and Samuel Weston, Justices of the Peace, residing in the town of Independence, were so forward to act in the discharge of their duties as magistrates, that they used their influence to effect a removal of those peaceable inhabitants, by signing the same instrument. Weston's conduct has previously been noticed; and it is to be remembered, that when applied to for a peace warrant he refused to grant one, when the mob were engaged in stoning houses, destroying property, and threatening lives. This was the republican who refused to give a warrant that M'Carty, who was taken in the act of breaking open Gilbert, Whitney & Co's store, might be dealt with according to the law.—Weston emigrated from England, if we mistake not, and if his character is not altered materially since he left that country, his native countrymen have reason to be thankful that there is another place on the earth beside the isle of Great Britain. Smith is a native of—we know not where; but presume that he must have come up among a race where mob laws were the supreme statutes of the land, by his forwardness in the affairs of this outrage. We noticed some other names attached to the same *secret constitution*, which has been affixed to them; but our memory is not so good at this time to enable us to name all. Neither can we give the characters of all who were engaged in this affair, in this article, nor every unlawful and wicked act committed by them; but we shall give extracts of some from time to time, until we can fulfil our promise previously made, to give in pamphlet form, in full, the general characters of the inhabitants of that country. By giving the conduct of a few of the more influential, our friends may draw their own conclusion relative to what the others undoubtedly are. Gan Johnson, a very devout, holy, (would be called,) Presbyterian, stood by and assisted in demolishing the printing office, on the 20th of July last. There is one act of this man, in this affair, which entitles him to our notice in this place; and were it not for

this, we know not as we should mention his name at this time. And as all great men, who have rendered themselves famous and conspicuous in the eyes of the world, are favored with privileges of appearing before the public in print, we think, considering this man's profession and standing in society in that county, that a failure to give him a passing notice, would be treating him with too much neglect. After the office was partly demolished, this Johnson, (with the cross-bar of a printer's chase in his hand,) was placed to see that nothing belonging to the office was taken by the owners from the hands of the mob; for, said they, "Destroy, or keep from them every thing, so that they shall not be able to print any more." Think for a moment, reader, how this *professor of religion* appeared, with a bar of iron in his hand to keep from the hands of lawful owners, every thing belonging to the establishment which he was then assisting to destroy, while you reflect, that he was then surrounded by an innocent family who had just been dragged (and some of them sick,) from the same building by those ruffians! Do you not think that he must have thought himself well employed, considering his profession and standing in society? How his bosom must have glowed with christian love while he was thus depriving women and children of a dwelling, and exposing them, though afflicted with sickness, to the inclemency of the weather under the open canopy! What better is an immediate death, than a lingering one?—Which would have been the most aggravating, think, in the sight of heaven, for this man to have fallen upon this helpless family with that bar of iron, and killed them at once, or do as he did, deprive them of 'he means of life, and drive them out to perish? Supposing a ruffian attacks a family, takes the life of the man, and deprives the remaining part of a dwelling, or even a means of subsistence, where in all human probability they must perish, is he not guilty of the blood of the whole? Where, reader, do you think such men will be sent when they are called from time? do you think they will be permitted to inherit those mansions which Christ told his disciples that he was going to prepare for them?

Since the foregoing was put in type the following letter has been received from the west, which will show that our conjectures were correct relative to criminal prosecution in Jackson county, which were, that no bill of indictment could be found against the mob. It could not reasonably be expected, that after binding themselves to violate the law they would now act according to it, and find bills against their own accomplices in those deeds of murder and violence. The mob may flatter themselves that all is over as regards criminal prosecutions, because they hold the power in their own hands; but the day may come when that county shall be inhabited by virtuous citizens who will "magnify the law and make it honorable." Justice may come in an unexpected hour upon the guilty. It yet remains for our friends to sue for damages, &c. and in all probability the suits will be removed to another county, which will give them a chance to obtain redress for the destruction of property. Enough is transpiring almost daily to show the public that the individuals composing that mob are on a level

with the most abandoned savage. We are happy to have it in our power yet to say, that our friends in all cases have only acted on the defensive, and have already borne more than the law of man or heaven ever required, without resistance.—[Editor of the Star.]

Clay Co. Feb. 27, 1834.

Dear Brethren—The times are so big with events, and the anxiety of every body so great to watch them, that I feel somewhat impressed to write oftener than I have done, in order to give you more of the "strange acts" of this region. I have just returned from Independence, the seat of war in the west.—About a dozen of our brethren, among whom were Mr. Partridge, Coirl and myself, were subpoenaed in behalf of the state, and on the 23d (Feb.) about 12 o'clock we were on the bank, opposite Everit's ferry, where we found Capt. Atchinson's company of "Liberty Blues," near fifty rank and file, ready to guard us into Jackson county. The soldiers were well armed with U. S. muskets, bayonets fixed, &c. and to me the scene was one "passing strange," and long to be remembered. The martial law in force to guard the civil! About twenty-five men crossed over to effect a landing in safety, and when they came near the warehouse, they fired six or eight guns, though the enemy had not gathered to witness the landing.

After we were all across, and waiting for the baggage wagon, it was thought not advisable to encamp in the woods, and the weaknesses with half the company, marched nearly a mile towards Independence, to build night fires, as we were without tents, and the weather cold enough to snow a little. While on the way the Quarter Master, and others, that had gone on ahead to prepare quarters in town, sent an express back, which was not the most pacific appearance that could be.—Capt. Atchinson continued the express to Col. Allen for the 20th drafted militia; and also to Liberty for more ammunition; and the night passed off in war-like style, with the sentinels marching silently at a proper distance from the watch fires.

Early in the morning we marched strongly guarded by the troops, to the seat of war, and quartered in the block-house, formerly the tavern stand of S. Flournoy. After breakfast, we were visited by the District Attorney, Mr. Ross, and the Attorney General, Mr. Wells. From them we learned that all hopes of criminal prosecution, was at an end. Mr. Wells had been sent by the Governor to investigate, as far as possible, the Jackson outrage, but the bold front of the mob, bouned even unto death, (as I have heard) was not to be penetrated by civil law, or awed by Executive influence. Shortly after Capt. A. informed me that he had just received an order from the Judge, that his company's service was no longer wanted in Jackson county, and we were marched out of town to the tune of Yankee-doodle in quick time, and soon returned to our camp ground without the loss of any lives. In fact much credit is due to Capt. Atchinson for his gallantry and hospitality, and I think I can say of the officers and company, that their conduct as soldiers and men, is highly reputable; so much so, knowing as I do, the fatal result, had the militia come, or not come, I can add, that the Captain's safe return, refreshed my mind,

with Zephon's retreat of the ten thousand.—Thus ends all hopes of "redress," even with a guard ordered by the Governor, for the protection of the court and witnesses.

Before a crop is harvested, it becomes ripe of itself. The dreadful deeds now done in Jackson county, with impunity, must bring matters to a focus shortly. Within two or three weeks past, some of the most savage acts, ever witnessed, have been committed by these *bitter branches*. Old father Linsey, whose locks have been whitened by the blasts of nearly seventy winters, had his house thrown down, after he was driven from it; his goods, corn, &c. piled together, and fire put to it, but fortunately, after the mob retired, his son extinguished it.

The mob has quit whipping, and now beat with clubs. Lyman Leonard one of the number that returned from Van Ruzen, had two chairs broke to splinters about him, and was then dragged out of doors and beat with clubs till he was supposed to be dead—but he is yet alive. Josiah Sumner and Barnet Cole were severely beat at the same time. The mob have commenced burning houses, stacks, &c. and we shall not think it out of their power, by any means, to proceed to murder any of our people that shall try to live in that county, or perhaps, only go there.

Such scenes as are transpiring around us, are calculated to arouse feelings, and passions in all, and to strengthen the faith and fortify the hearts of the saints for great things. Our Savior laid down his life for our sakes, and shall we, who profess to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God; shall we, the servants of the Lord of the vineyard, who are called and chosen to prune it for the last time; shall we, yes, verily, we, who are enlightened by the wisdom of heaven, shall we fear to do as much for Jesus as he did for us. No; we will obey the voice of the Spirit, that good may overcome the world.

I am a servant, &c.

W. W. PHELPS.

OBITUARY.

DIED on the 4th of December, last, near Pontiac, Michigan Territory, of consumption, brother William Scooby, formerly of Fayette, Seneca county, N. Y. aged 22 years. Brother S. received and obeyed the everlasting gospel, in Fayette, after which he emigrated to this country in 1834. For the last two years of his life he has resided in Michigan. Our personal acquaintance with bro. S. was very limited, but we are credibly informed that he was a worthy member of the church of Christ, and that he died as he lived, in the full assurance of a glorious resurrection at the appearing of our Lord. His death should have been noticed by us ere this; but the letter which gave the intelligence of his decease did not bring an account of his age, &c. Our friends from a distance wishing us to notice the death of their relatives, should make no delay in communicating such information.

[Communicated.]

Saco, Maine, February 12, 1834.

BROTHER O. COWDERY:

I drop you this line to inform you that I am well: the Lord is present with me, and his work is prospering in this place; many are desirous to know the truth. I have calls on the right hand and on

the left: there is need of faithful laborers in this section, who are qualified to stand against the wiles of satan, and are finished workmen in the gospel of Christ; yes, in the new and everlasting covenant, and have faith like the brother of Jared. The Lord seems to be baptizing the church in this place with the outpouring of his Spirit: they are strong in the Lord and rejoicing in his love."

"I have just returned from paying the last respects due from us to sister MARY BRADBURY, who was a worth member in the church of Christ. She died yesterday morning after a consuming illness of about sixteen weeks, aged 26 years. During the latter part of her sickness she manifested a calm resignation to the will of a divine Providence; and when death was about to grasp her in his icy arms, she stayed herself on the promise of him who is able to save, and who gave himself a ransom for her soul. In her last moments, when kindred spirits waited round to escort her spirit to the Paradise of rest, she said, 'I am dying—glory to my Jesus, even so Lord Jesus come quickly;' then on the breast of her Redeemer she reposed her weary head, and without a sigh or struggle."

'Breath'd her life out sweetly there.'

"I have nothing more at present to write only, that I feel strong in the Lord, and am determined to press my way to the celestial kingdom. Yours, &c.

JOHN F. BOYNTON."

Thus are mortals called from this to another state of existence, the present, like all other generations, passing off to try the realities of eternity, after having been permitted to dwell in the flesh—and others rising up to fill their place. This life, seemingly, is but a dream; for soon, our friends, though near and pleasing, drop into the dust: our affections cannot stay the hand of death, nor our tears prevent their exit. In all these dispensations of God, we are reminded of our own approaching dissolution, and the final consummation of all these earthly objects. Short is this life which is allotted to man; but there is sweet consolation, that the ore to which we are fast approaching, has no end. And why should we seek to cling to the saint, when he is called to leave us only for a moment, and when a little space will bring us together where parting will not be realized? For soon this earth will rack by the mighty power of its Maker; soon creation will tremble; soon will the tribes of the earth mourn; soon will the wicked call for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, to cover them from the face of HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, and soon will the saints be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, mid-gle praises with the church of the first born, and death shall be swallowed up in victory! [Editor of the Star.]

OPINION.—OUR readers are, no doubt, acquainted with the proceedings of the municipal court, held some time since in Boston, Me, in the case of Abner Kneeland, editor of the "Investigator," who was sentenced, on charge of blasphemy, for expressing a belief that there was no God, no further existence, &c. to three months imprisonment in the common jail, and to recognition of the sum of \$540, with sufficient security

in the like sum, to keep the peace for two years. "The Hartford Times," in making some comments upon the remarks of "The Universalist," which justifies the court in the case of Mr. Kneeland, says:

"Paul was a pestilent fellow," in the eyes of some of the ancient authorities, who thought a mild enforcement of the laws necessary. We do not mean to compare Mr. Kneeland with Paul; but to say that error is ready at all times to prop itself with the legal arm. It is not for man to set up a standard of belief for his fellow man, and to enforce that belief with stripes, dungeon-bolts, or the scaffold itself."

We have previously read the "Investigator," and were not a little surprised at the folly of Mr. Kneeland; indeed, we may say, that we were disgusted with the foul calumny with which he assailed the subject of revealed religion, so much so, that we laid down his paper, and probably for the last time. If the good people of Massachusetts would do the same, none of them would have been troubled with it to this day.—Believing as we do, in the divine authenticity of the bible, and the religion therein revealed, we cannot see where it authorizes the state of Massachusetts to defend itself by enacting laws to favor their own particular opinions, and lock up all others, whether they believe or disbelieve it, unless they have a mount Sinai, and lately from its summit have heard the trump of the Almighty, declaring his statutes and judgments. We are unacquainted with the constitution of that State; but any law interfering with conscience in the least, is directly opposite to the Constitution of the United States, and is an infringement upon the rights of every citizen over which it claims jurisdiction. If they have a right to lock Mr. Kneeland into jail for his opinion, or even for expressing it, they have an equal right to hang him for the same, as their progenitors did the Quakers. In no instance does man show his weakness sooner, than when he has recourse to the civil law to enforce his opinion; and in no case whatever can he quicker and more effectually show that his system never came from God!

The "Times" says, In the year 1823, the Judges of the Supreme court of the State of Connecticut, declared that Universalism was an immoral and dangerous doctrine, and that those who believed in it should be outlawed." This we could reasonably expect from the land of "Blue laws;" and the other from a country where they formerly murdered persons for their opinions; but we are thankful that none of them will be appointed to judge the world, nor receive power to shut heaven from any one. They may make bolts and bars here, and here is the only place where they can ever use them. God is to be thanked, that the religion which he has revealed for the salvation of men, is in no want of being bolstered up to keep it from falling, or from becoming untrue; by employing Massachusetts or Connecticut to enact laws to shut from society such men as Kneeland for fear they will investigate it!—[Editor of the Star.]

The Evening and the Morning Star, KIRTLAND, OHIO, MARCH, 1834.

THE PROPHECY OF ZEPHANIAH.

(Continued from our last.)

Perhaps it might have been considered superfluous in Zephaniah, to predict the downfall of other nations, beside Israel, without carrying the same to them, or causing it to be done; but how far this was the case we shall not pretend to say, as we have no information on the subject contained in the sacred volume. It is a fact, that many of the prophets of Israel were very free in their predictions upon the heathen nations; and Israel might from time to time have seen the fulfilment of many of them had they looked ere this day. Jonah, as appears from the account, visited Nineveh and proclaimed the word of God to its inhabitants; and, what is very remarkable, they repented and covered themselves with sackcloth from the king to the lowest servant; while Israel, favored with prophets from the beginning of their location in the land of Palestine, rushed on in wickedness till the wrath of heaven overtook them to the uttermost. But it ought to be remembered, that Jonah lived in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, more than one hundred and fifty years before the days of Zephaniah, and more than eighty previous to the time when the king of Assyria took the ten tribes from their own land to which they have not yet been restored.—And though the pride and boast of Assyria was humbled to the dust at the voice of God through one of the prophets from the land of Israel, yet now they could march fearlessly into the heart of that country and lead captive its inhabitants, because they had forsaken their Shepherd.

How far Nineveh had been enlightened by the revelations of the Lord previous to the time when Jonah visited it, we are not able to say, but we conclude, that they must have revered the word of God more than most people in our day, or else Jonah's appearance and preaching would not have excited such an alarm, and been the means of so great a reformation. Neither is it for us to say how long they continued righteous afterward; but we may conclude, that if a great people can turn from evil to good in a few days, in the space of eighty years, without continual preaching to, they could again fall into wickedness. But this perhaps, may be thought digressing too far from the subject of Zephaniah's prophecy; though we are under the necessity of looking at the principal part of his predictions as we pass to the point which we had in view when we commenced; and we are of the opinion, that a minute investigation into even the least or shortest prophecy contained in the scriptures, would be of lasting benefit to any individual who might take the trouble and devote the time to that employment. The prophecies, are thought by many to be of no consequence whatever in our day to the human family; and that, if they are not all fulfilled, (as many suppose them to be,) they are clothed in mysteries and wrapped in metaphors far beyond our comprehension; and if ever fulfilled, the real meaning is so foreign from the literal word, that no one in our time can know any thing what the prophets did mean when they spoke.

consequently, it is of no importance to us whether they are fulfilled, or whether they remain yet to be; and under circumstances of such a nature, it would matter nothing to us one way nor the other; for though the thing might have been plain to the prophet in his vision, it has since been locked up in the bosom of God, and is never to be shown again till it is accomplished; and then, no one can know it but himself, because he had hid it from the discernment of mortals.

It must be admitted, that even if the prophecies are dark and mysterious to us, they were, in a greater or less degree understood by those who spake them; and this we infer from the fact, that many of their predictions were fulfilled as they were literally spoken; and all the vast overturns among the surrounding nations seemed to have a bearing upon the history of Israel, and the prophets seldom closed their predictions without remarking something that should befall them. They knew that if Israel was scattered the heathen must also suffer in their turn; and if the children of Judah were chastened for their iniquities, their idolatrous neighbours, must, in due time be destroyed. Moab and Ammon, were looked upon by many of the prophets of Israel and were threatened with judgments. Zephaniah looked upon the time when they should reap their just reward for all the bitter affliction that they had brought upon Israel, and with sublime and positive language declares their overthrow. He says:

I have heard the reproach of Moab and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.—Therefore, as I live saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and salt-pits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.—Who but those instructed by the Spirit of the Lord could suppose, or even would admit for a moment, the possibility that the children of Lot, after centuries of prosperity, in which they had conquered nations and enriched themselves with their spoils, could suddenly be diminished and brought into subjection to a people whose physical power was at the time of Zephaniah so far inferior to their own; and that too, after Israel had been diminished by the judgments which had overtaken them from the hand of the Lord; for the remnant of Judah were not to possess them, until they themselves had been led into captivity.

It may be thought by some, that these predictions were fulfilled when Judah returned from the Babylonish captivity; but we ask, did not these nations more or less of them exist at that time; and did not the Jews receive assistance from the Babylonians to re-instate themselves in the land of Judea, when they did return; and were not these nations constantly annoying the remnant of Jacob for a long period; and when these nations were under the yoke of other nations did Judah possess their land? It is said, the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. So far from spoiling the heathen or possessing their land, we know, (if we may credit the ac-

count,) that they were struggling to maintain their own; and even down to the coming of the Messiah Judea was a Roman province. But any man acquainted with the history of the Jews at this age, and the nations which then surrounded Palestine, on a moment's reflection will admit, that these prophecies in part have, in the strictest sense been literally fulfilled: So far, at least as we have any account of their fulfilment, it must be acknowledged a literal one. Where now is Gaza, and where is Ashkelon? Foraken and desolate! Where is Ashdod and where is Ekron? Driven out and rooted up! Where are the inhabitants of Moab, and where are the children of Ammon? They are like Sodom, consumed and overthrown, a desolation in the eyes of every beholder, and a warning to every nation, that it is unsafe to sport with the people of God! Where is Assyria, and where is Nineveh that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me? The Assyrians themselves have long since been destroyed or led captives and mingled with other nations, and Nineveh has sunk like a stone into the mighty deep! But the children of Judah, though often scourged by the chastening hand of the Lord for their iniquities, and often led into captivity by their enemies, and made to serve in cruel bondage, yet their descendants remain and their posterity is still extant without being swallowed up in other nations, while many who have afflicted them have melted away: their national glory has become extinct, and all but their name has sunk in oblivion.

In the last chapter of this prophecy there is an advance of thought on the subject of Israel's situation, beyond the time when they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, or even when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews scattered into all parts of the earth. It must be plain to every man who is acquainted with his bible, or even common history: that a large portion of this chapter has not yet been fulfilled, or else the prophet spake figuratively, and did not calculate to edify Israel by his words nor the rising generations with his writings. But certainly, a part of his prophecy has been literally fulfilled, and that portion of it too which spake of the fall of certain nations which were wealthy and populous, as well as the judgments which came upon Jerusalem.—And since he has left us no rule to interpret it contrary from its plain reading, we do not feel justified in attempting to write, or to construe a sentence of it differently, without we can be made acquainted with the word of the Lord to that effect; and until then, we feel a conscience void of offence when we believe that all that has not been fulfilled precisely as it was spoken, will be in due time. If not, we shall then have to acknowledge, that we have known but little respecting the sayings of the ancient prophets; and that part which we now suppose has been fulfilled, might as well never have been spoken or written; for we cannot now be benefited in the least by them: and previous to the time when we can be, we must have another revelation to teach us what the old one means. Paul said in his epistle to the Romans, in the xvth chap: and 4th verse, that, whatsoever things were written afore-

time, were written for our learning, that we through faith and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Either Paul and his brethren understood the sayings of the prophets to mean what they said, or they must have had some rule of interpretation which we have not, or else certainly, neither comfort nor hope could have been derived from a perusal of them. If they understood them to mean as they read, why not those who believe them understand them in the same manner in this age? But perhaps some of our friends may say, that the ancient churches had some rule by which they could penetrate into the dark sayings of the ancients, and unfold them to their full satisfaction, and thereby obtain much comfort and great hope; but when they left this rule, so they took it from the earth, and it is now in the bosom of eternity, locked up safely and securely, beyond the power of man to obtain; and since the ancient apostles established the church of Christ, and wrote many epistles to their brethren upon the subject, we have no need of any thing more: and a rule to enable us to interpret the whole bible, and lay out every secret, and unfold every mystery, would not be of any use to us, even were God willing to favor us with such an one. Neither would we believe it were it given, because we do not believe that he ever intended to speak again to mankind while the earth remains. So then, had we every necessary accomplishment to understand all the sayings in the whole scriptures it would do us no good; we should not act upon it, because we should not believe it. And this, in short, is the sad difficulty with the world at this day: they do not believe that the prophets meant what they said, neither do they believe that we can find out what they did mean; and yet hundreds are figuring, interpreting and expounding, for their hundreds and their thousands every year to tell the people something about the scriptures, which they, and the expositors themselves acknowledge that no man can understand, because they are all metaphors and types, and the Author of them long since ceased to speak to men; and the whole must remain at last as it was in the beginning!

We, were not disposed to condemn any portion of our fellow-beings for not believing as we do, or because they do not hold the words of the Lord by the mouths of his ancient prophets, precisely in the light that we conceive them to mean; or we might say, because they do not believe them to mean any thing that we can be benefitted with, because we cannot understand them; and we ourselves thinking that he meant to communicate his word to man in an intelligent manner, suited to his capacity, in some degree, that he might be benefitted by the same. We know, that in a free government, in the midst of a free-thinking and enlightened people, every man has the privilege as he chooses, and of interpreting the words of the prophets as to him may appear the most proper and right: and is left, (so far as human law can interfere,) to act his own choice freely and dispassionately, and settle all questions as to the items of his faith and religion uncontrolled by human influence; and there the matter may rest between himself and his Maker. A glorious

blessing! A privilege which, in our opinion cannot be estimated too highly, nor too thankfully acknowledged before Him who holds the destinies of all nations in his own hands, and who aways his scepter over all people.

But we cannot see the propriety of the idea that admits certain parts of prophecies to have been literally fulfilled, and other parts of the same prophecies, spoken by the same individuals, to be understood differently, because the time has not transpired when they were designed in the mind of the Lord to be, when they were spoken. We presume that it will readily be admitted, that the prophecies previously quoted, so far at least as they related to the downfall and overthrow of those nations against whom the judgments of the Almighty were denounced, have, in the plainest manner been literally fulfilled.

The Jews were led into captivity by their enemies, and Jerusalem was destroyed, and the land of Judea laid waste according to the plain declaration of the Lord by the mouth of the prophet, when he said that he would stretch out his hand upon Judah, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and utterly consume all things from off the land.

Having sketched considerably upon the two first chapters of Zephaniah's prophecy, we shall now speak more particularly of a portion of the matter written in the last.—There is however, a sufficient contained in the two first to afford a field for contemplation for a length of time, at least, when the fact is admitted, that it is the word of God, and that the very design of the Lord in giving it to his creatures was, that they might understand it and be benefitted thereby. In the chapter before us there is a stretch, or advance of thought peculiar and interesting; and such too as seems to have occupied the minds of the ancient prophets of Israel in a greater or less degree, which is easily to be discovered over the surface of a large portion of their prophecies. For though they predicted the dispersion of Israel and the captivity of the Jews, yet they seldom left these subjects, or closed their prophecies without speaking of the time when they should be brought back triumphant, and return to the land that God gave by promise to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession: which the reader will find written in language the most positive, if he will but take the trouble to look into their sayings.

After reminding the remnant of Israel then in the land, of the might and power of the Lord in the destruction of his enemies, or the enemies of his people, and in their salvation and protection, if faithful to his commandment, he declares to them that their sins are many and grievous; accusing their princes, their judges, and even their prophets and priests, saying they were like roaring lions, evenin wolves, light, and vain and treacherous; that they had polluted the sanctuary, and done violence to the law; he declares again that he will lay waste the nations, cut off their towers, and lay open their streets to desolation, that there is no man, that there is no inhabitant. But notwithstanding all these, he exhorts them to wait upon him still, for he had determined a time when he would raise up to the pray, when the earth should be consumed with the fire

of his jealousy: when he would gather the nations, that he might assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger: for, said he, all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

He said, I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate, I made their streets waste, that none passed by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. Therefore, wait ye upon me saith the Lord. Certainly, there is a peculiar force to these remarkable words: Wait ye upon me! How long? Till the time when I shall rise up to the prey! When has God for Israel rose up to the prey? When has he gathered the nations and assembled the kingdoms? and when has he poured upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, and when has all the earth been devoured with the fire of his jealousy? Was it when Israel came out of the land of Egypt? The Egyptians were then the only sufferers: The posterity of Ham then felt the wrath and vengeance of Israel's God; but not the whole earth. Pharaoh's hosts were then collected, and Thebes from her hundred gates sent forth her tents of thousands to trample down and take the spoil; but the outstretched arm of Jehovah in the defense of Jacob, caused them to be swallowed up in the Red Sea; and yet the nations were not then gathered, nor the kingdoms assembled, neither was the whole earth devoured with the fire of his jealousy. Was it when Israel marched into the land of Canaan with Joshua at their head, directed by the voice of the Lord? Jordan stood upon heaps at the approach of God's covenant people, and the walls of Jericho fell to the earth when they shouted in his name; the surrounding nations, the posterity of Canaan felt the shock; but the nations were not then gathered, nor the kingdoms assembled, neither all the earth devoured with the fire of his jealousy: the time had not arrived, nor had the prediction yet been made by the prophets of Israel. But centuries must roll away, and Jacob be driven from his land before that period was to come when he would, for his sake, devour the earth with the fire of his jealousy. Wait ye upon me! How many tedious hours has Israel, upon this word so big with meaning, sat in captivity, reviled and rejected, a hiss, a taunt, and a by-word, and waited with longing and with sighs too large to be expressed, for the precious voice to sound from the throne of I AM, and proclaim, Rise up! Rise up! Return ye! Return ye! O my people of the house of Israel; for this is the time that I will rise up to the prey! Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord. How oft has Israel wept in captivity, while waiting for that long looked for hour; and how oft the arm of violence been raised because he still persisted that God would yet call himself, and declare that the time had arrived when he would rise up to the prey! How fruitless has been the labors of Gentile Missionaries in attempting to convert the seed of Jacob from the errors of their ways, by pretending that God had sent them, and at the same time declaring that God had ceased to talk to men. Nor could it surprise a man of common sense, that the Israelites should turn from them with disdain, after hearing that God had called for Jacob to return to him again; and had not

spoken from the heavens directly to that effect. Israel will never be duped with such a plan of inconsistency! The prophets in ancient days heard the voice of the Lord, and declared that in the last days their seed should hear it again. And though the Jews stumbled and were scattered, yet they look with longing anxiety, and wait to hear the acceptable sound that, the time has come when I will build you as at the first, and lead you as at the beginning; and make bare my holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of God! And we have no scruple in saying, that Israel will never embrace the gospel, nor the Jews believe in the Messiah as a people, till the Lord sends his word to them; for their fathers once enjoyed this blessing, and left it upon record that their children should inherit the same; and though they are scattered to the four winds, and peeled with affliction and adversity, they will yet wait till God himself shall speak; till he himself shall rise up to the prey! Convince Israel of this, and the work will soon be done. Convince him that the Lord himself has called, and no power of man can prevent his gathering. Let him once again be taught by the voice of the living God from on high, and the work of reformation will immediately be accomplished. But till then, the attempts of the Gentiles will be fruitless; it is what the Jews cannot, nor will not believe. If they should they would lay aside the voice of their fathers contained in the prophets, that they should in the last days, hear again; but this they have not, nor never will. That reflection which rolls across the mind, that their Shepherd once taught their fathers, is cherished too dearly to be exchanged for a phantom, a dream, a bubble, a vain and foolish whim, got up in the brains of the Gentiles, that God would never speak again to mankind! It will never be accepted with Israel; it will never be believed by the seed of Jacob: for that at once destroys the testimony of their fathers, that God would, in the last days, gather their children to the land of Canaan to possess it forever. Men who never heard the voice of God themselves, neither their fathers, but are dependent upon the voice of inspiration to another people who are no nearer related than the Jews and the Gentiles, may preach, perhaps, with some success among those who are in the same situation: for they will wait according to the declaration of their fathers, till the Lord shall rise up to the prey! Then, and not till then, will Israel be converted!

Zephaniah proceeds, after speaking of the great commotion which is to take place at the time, or before Israel returns to his own land, and says, For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplicants, even the daughter of my dispersed shall bring mine offering.— We understand that the pure language is to be turned to the people after the nations are gathered, and the kingdoms assembled, and the indignation poured upon them, when all the earth is consumed with the fire of the Lord's jealousy, and not till then; because this marvelous display of the power of God is to be exerted that they may all call upon him to serve him with one consent: and who can

not see, that they cannot all serve him with one consent while a part are righteous and a part wicked! *And thou* Signifies afterward: After the wicked are cut off the righteous shall speak a pure language. It is said, long after the great Deluge, that the earth was of one language, and the Lord confounded that, and sent, or scattered the people into all the earth. If we can believe the first, why not the last? If we believe that all the earth once spake the same language, and that was confounded by the power of God, why not believe that God has power to cause the earth to speak one language again? Suppose that a Greek, a Roman, a Frenchman, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, an Englishman, and an Arab, were to be saved by listening to the gospel of Christ; when they arrived in heaven could they understand each other? or would the Lord have a school where they would all be taught to speak one language? and if so, what language would it be? Our readers, no doubt would smile at our folly, were they to think that we had any such belief. If then, God has power to cause all nations and languages to speak the same language, when in heaven, what is the reason that he has not power to cause the same on earth? Has he not all power? O yes, our friends will say: but you know, that he has long since ceased to work miracles on earth. Can that be the fact? If it is, we have to confess our ignorance; for we have not yet found in our bible where the Lord said he would ever cease to work on earth, or in heaven. Perhaps it may be in some corner of our neighbor's, and so closely written that we have not found it: not being favored with *very* discerning eyes.— From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia! It will be admitted, we presume, that Zephaniah was in the land of Judea while delivering this notable prediction; and where, we ask, could the Lord's suppliants be found beyond the rivers of Ethiopia? Had he a people upon the continent of Africa? Was Israel driven there when Shalmanasser king of Assyria took them from the land of Palestine? Did they not, after taking counsel to leave the land of the heathen, go to the north? And is it not said that they passed over the narrow passage of the Euphrates, [not Ethiopia,] while the Lord held the flood? And is it not said again, that he will smite it in the seven streams in the last days and cause men to go over dry shod? Where, then, are his suppliants who were to bring his offering from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia? Was this fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon? This could not be, because Babylon was not beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, neither was a pure language turned to the people, that they might all call upon the Lord to serve him with one consent.

In that day, [when the pure language is restored, and the suppliants have brought the offering from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,] thou shalt not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain. For such as are conversant with the prophets, we conclude, that a lengthy comment upon this verse will be of but little edification: for all ought to know, that there never has been a time since Israel came out of Egypt when the Lord took from

their midst all that rejoiced in pride. And thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain! If Jerusalem has been a holy place since the time when Zephaniah delivered this prophecy, we would like to be informed when: for when this is fulfilled his people are to be no more haughty, because of his holy mountain. If Jerusalem was then holy, the Jews never found out that fact, if they did they cared but little about it, or they would have been better prepared to receive the Messiah when he came. As a proof that the last sentence has not been fulfilled, we make a short quotation from the prophecy of Isaiah, which will show very plainly that Jerusalem is yet to be inhabited by the Jews, and is also to be a holy place.— The Arabs may now call Jerusalem a holy place; the Catholics may also, as well as the city of Rome, because Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom in it and the Pope; (their holy father, the successor of St. Peter, and the vicar of Jesus Christ, as they call him,) now resides in the same: [Rome] but in our opinion, Jerusalem is far lacking in holiness, and has ever been since the days of Zephaniah. Isaiah xxvii 12 & 13. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown: and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. When has the great trumpet been blown in Assyria, and when has the channel of the river been beaten off that Israel might come one by one? and when have they worshipped in his holy mount at Jerusalem?

Every sentence of the last of Zephaniah's prophecy seems to be spoken in that plain and intelligent manner, that every individual who admits the fact, that Israel will return to the land of his fathers in the last days, must be ready to conclude, that if there is any confidence to be placed in the words of prophecy, and if we can believe that they were ever designed to be understood, the prophet must have had his eye fixed upon the time when the Lord was about to rise up to the pray: when he was about to exalt that long afflicted people above the power of all their oppressors, and establish them in righteousness by his own hand. He again says: The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies: neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. When, since the days of this prophet, has Israel dwelt in the land of Canaan in righteousness, and been guilty of no iniquity, nor spoken lies? When has been a time when a deceitful tongue was not to be found in their mouths? Was it after the Babylonish captivity? Who does not know, that they were filled with violence and iniquity, that deceit and wickedness filled Jerusalem from one end to the other, and they falsely accused even their Messiah & shed his blood? Was this the righteous people of whom the prophet was here writing, that they should be so completely delivered from all their enemies that they should feed and lie down in peace, there being none to make them afraid?

Were they not in constant and almost unceasing wars? Famine and the sword were on every side from their return from Babylon, to the days when Titus took the city and razed it to the foundation.

(To be continued.)

THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH IN KIRTLAND, TO THEIR BRETHREN ABROAD.

(Continued from our last.)

Dear brethren in Christ, and companions in tribulation:

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the more conspicuous are his views; and the greater his enjoyments, until he has overcome the will of this life and lost every desire of sin; and like the ancients, arrives to that point of faith that he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment: he must have been instructed into the government and laws of that kingdom by proper degrees, till his mind was capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equity, and consistency of the same. For further instruction we refer you to Deut. xxxii. where the Lord says, that Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. We found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye, &c. which will show the force of the last item advanced, that it is necessary for men to receive an understanding concerning the laws of the heavenly kingdom, before they are permitted to enter it: we mean the celestial glory. So dissimilar are the governments of men, and so divers are their laws, from the government and laws of heaven, that a man, for instance, hearing that there was a country on this globe called the United States of North America, could take his journey to this place without first learning the laws of government; but the conditions of God's kingdom are such, that all who are made partakers of that glory, are under the necessity of first learning something respecting it previous to their entering into it. But the foreigner comes to this country without knowing a syllable of its laws, or even subscribing to obey them after he arrives. Why? Because the government of the U. States does not require it: it only requires an obedience to its laws after the individual has arrived within its jurisdiction.

As we previously remarked, we do not attempt to place the law of man on a parallel with the law of heaven; but we will bring forward another item, to further urge the propriety of yielding obedience to the law of heaven, after the fact is admitted, that the laws of man are binding upon man. Were a king to extend his dominion over the habitable earth, and send forth his laws which were of the most perfect kind, and command his subjects one and all to yield obedience to the same; and annex as a reward to those who obeyed them, that at a certain period they should be called to attend the marriage of his son, who in due time was to receive the kingdom, and they should be made equal with him in the same; & annex as a penalty for disobedience that every individual should be cast out at the marriage feast, and have no part nor portion with his government; and what rational mind could for a moment accuse the king with injustice for punishing such rebellious subjects? In the first place his laws were just, easy and perfect: nothing was required in them of a tyrannical nature, but their very construction was equity and beauty; and when obeyed would produce the happiest situation possible to all who adhered to them; beside the last great benefit of sitting down with a royal table in the presence of the king at the great, grand marriage supper of his son, and be made equal with him in all the glories of the kingdom.

When these royal laws were issued, and promulgated throughout the vast dominion, every subject, when interrogated whether he believed them to be from his sovereign, answered, Yes, I know they are. I am acquainted with the signature; for it is so usual, **THUS SAITH THE KING!** This admitted, the subject is bound by every consideration of honor to his country, his king, and his own personal character, to observe in the strictest sense every requisition in the royal edict. Should any escape the search of the ambassadors of the king, and never hear these last laws, giving

his subjects such exalted privileges, an excuse might be urged in their behalf, and they escape the censure of the king. But for those who had heard, who had admitted, and who had promised obedience to these just laws no excuse could be urged, and when brought in to the presence of the king, certainly, justice would require that they should suffer a penalty! Could that king be just in admitting these rebellious individuals into the full enjoyment and privileges with his son, and those who had been obedient to his commandments? Certainly not. Because they disregarded the voice of their lawful king; they had no regard for his virtuous laws, for his dignity, nor for the honor of his name; neither for their own country's sake, nor their private virtue! They neither regarded his authority enough to obey him, neither did they regard the immediate advantages and blessings arising from these laws if kept, to observe them, so destitute were they of virtue and goodness; and above all, they regarded so little the joy and satisfaction of a legal seat in the presence of the king's only son, and to be made equal with him in all the blessings, honors, comforts, and felicities of his kingdom, that they turned away from an anticipation of them, and considered that they were beneath their present notice, though they had no doubt as to the real authenticity of the royal edict.

We ask, again, would the king be just in admitting these rebels to all the privileges of his kingdom, with those who had served him with the strictest integrity? We again answer, No! such individuals would be dangerous characters in any government, good and wholesome laws they despised; just and perfect principles they trampled under their feet as something beneath their notice, and disregarded those commands of their sovereign entirely which they had once acknowledged to be equitable! How could a government be conducted with harmony if its administrators were possessed with such different dispositions and different principles? Could it prosper? Could it flourish? Would harmony prevail? Would order be established, and could justice be executed in righteousness in all branches of its department? No! In it were two classes of men as dissimilar as light is from darkness, virtue from vice, justice from injustice, truth from falsehood, and holiness from sin! One class were perfectly harmless and virtuous: they knew what virtue was for they had lived in the fullest enjoyment of it, and their fidelity to truth fairly tested by a series of years of faithful obedience to all its heavenly precepts. They knew what good order was, for they had been orderly and obedient to the laws imposed on them by their wise sovereign, and had experienced the benefits arising from a life spent in his government till he had now seen proper to make them equal with his son. Such individuals would indeed adorn any court where perfection was one of its main springs of action; and shine far more fair than the richest gem in the diadem of the prince!

The other class were a set of individuals who disregarded every principle of justice & equity, whatever; and this is demonstrated from the fact, that when just laws were issued by the king, which were perfectly equitable, they were so lost to a sense of righteousness that they disregarded those laws, not

withstanding an obedience to them would have produced the happiest result possible, at the time, as regarded their own personal comfort and advantage. They were entirely destitute of harmony and virtue, so much so that virtuous laws they despised. They had proven themselves unworthy a place in the joys of the prince, because they had for a series of years lived in open violation of his government. Certainly, then, those two classes of men could not hold the reins of the same government at the same time in peace; for internal jars, broils, and discords would rack it to the center, were such a form of government to exist under such a system. The virtuous could not enjoy peace in the constant and unceasing schemes and evil plans of the wicked; neither could the wicked have enjoyment in the constant perseverance of the righteous to do justly. And that there must be an agreement in this government, or it could not stand, must be admitted by all.—Should the king convey the reins into the hands of the rebellious the government must soon fall; for every government, from the creation to the present, when it ceased to be virtuous, and failed to execute justice, sooner or later has been overthrown. And without virtuous principles to actuate a government all care for justice is soon lost, and the only motive which prompts it to act is, ambition and selfishness. Should the king admit these rebels into his house to make them equal with the others, would be condescending beneath his character; because he once issued virtuous laws which were received by a part of his subjects, and the reward annexed was a seat at the marriage feast, and an adoption into his own family as lawful heirs. So should he now offer any thing differently he would blast forever his own reputation, and destroy forever that government which he once so diligently labored to establish and preserve, and which he once had wisdom to organize. Such individuals as the last named, would be a bane to a virtuous government, and would prove its overthrow if suffered to hold a part in conducting its helm!

We take the sacred writings into our hands, and admit that they were given by direct inspiration for the good of man. We believe that God condescended to speak from the heavens and declare his will concerning the human family: give to them just and holy laws to regulate their conduct, and guide them in a direct way, that in due time he might take them to himself, and make them joint heirs with his Son. But when this fact is admitted, that the immediate will of heaven is here contained, are we not bound, as rational creatures to live in accordance to all its precepts? Will the mere admission, that this is the will of heaven ever benefit us if we do not comply with all its teachings? Do we not offer violence to the Supreme Intelligence of heaven, when we admit the truth of its teachings, and do not obey them? Do we not condescend beneath our own character, and the better wisdom which heaven has endowed us with, by such a course of conduct? For these reasons, if we have direct revelations given us from heaven, surely those revelations were never given to be trifled with, without the trifle's incurring displeasure, and assuming vengeance upon their own heads, if there is any justice in heaven; and that there is, must be admitted by every indi-

vidual who admits the truth and force of its teachings; its blessings and cursings, as contained in the sacred volume.

Here, then, we have this part of our subject immediately before us for consideration: God has in reserve a time, or period appointed in his own becom, when he will bring all his subjects, who have obeyed his voice and kept his commandments, into his celestial rest. This rest is of such perfection and glory, that man has need of a preparation before he can, according to the laws of that kingdom enter it and enjoy its blessings.—This being the fact, God has given certain laws to the human family, which, if observed, are sufficient to prepare them to inherit this rest. This, then, we conclude, was the purpose of God in giving his laws to us: if not, why, or for what were they given? If the whole family of man were as well off without them as they might be with them, for what purpose or intent were they ever given? Was it that God wanted to merely show that he could talk? This would be nonsense, to suppose that he would condescend to talk in vain: for it would be in vain, and to no purpose whatever: because, all the commandments contained in the law of the Lord, have the sure promise annexed of a reward to all who obey; predicated upon the fact, that they are really the promises of a Being who cannot lie, one who is abundantly able to fulfil every tittle of his word: and if man were as well prepared, or could be as well prepared, to meet God without their ever having been given in the first instance, why were they ever given? for certainly, in that case they can now do him no good.

As we previously remarked, all well established and properly organized governments have certain fixed and prominent laws for the regulation and management of the same. If man has grown to wisdom and is capable of discerning the propriety of laws to govern nations, what less can we expect from the Ruler and Upholder of the universe! Can we suppose that he has a kingdom without laws? Or do we believe that it is composed of an innumerable company of beings who are entirely beyond all law? Consequently have need of nothing to govern or regulate them? Would not such ideas be reproachful to our Great Parent, and an attempt to cast a stigma upon his glorious character? Would it not be asserting, that we had found out a secret beyond Deity? That we had learned that it was good to have laws, and yet He, after existing from eternity, and having power to create man, had not found out the fact, that it was proper to have laws for his government? We admit that God is the great source and fountain from whence proceeds all good; that he is perfect intelligence, and that his wisdom is alone sufficient to govern and regulate the mighty creations and worlds which shine and blaze with such magnificence and splendor over our heads, as tho' touched with his finger and moved by his Almighty word. And if so, it is done and regulated by law; for without law all must certainly fall into chaos. If, then, we admit that God is the source of all wisdom and understanding; we must admit that by his direct inspiration he has taught man that law was necessary in order to govern and regulate his own immediate interest and welfare: For this reason, it is beneficial to promote

peace and happiness among men. And as before remarked, God is the source from whence proceeds all good; and if man is benefited by law, then certainly, law is good; and if law is good, it, or the principle of it emanated from God; for God is the source of all good; consequently, then, he was the first Author of law, or the principle of it, to mankind.

[The foregoing should, by good rights, have appeared in No. 17, but was omitted by accident.]

Having in a former number of the Star, written you quite lengthy on some few items connected with the religion which we profess, we deem it of importance to the cause in which all our united efforts ought, with an eye single to the glory of God, to be engaged, that we may escape the corruptions of the world, and not only show ourselves approved in his sight, but may be instruments in the order of his providence in convincing some of our fellow-travellers to eternity of the importance of turning from error to righteousness, and embracing the fulness of the everlasting gospel—to continue this letter of instruction and exhortation, believing, (as we have previously remarked,) that on your part it will be received in brotherly fellowship. We would remind you, brethren, of the fatigues, trials, privations, and persecutions, which the ancient saints endured for the only purpose of persuading men of the excellency and propriety of the faith of Christ, were it in our opinion necessary, or would serve in any respect to stimulate you to labor in the vineyard of the Lord with any more diligence; but we have reason to believe, (if you make the holy scriptures a sufficient part of your studies,) that their perseverance is known to you all; and that they were willing to sacrifice the present honors and pleasures of this world, that they might obtain an assurance of a crown of life from the hand of our Lord; and their excellent examples in labor, which manifests their zeal to us in the cause which they embraced, you are daily striving to pattern. And not only these, but the commandments of our Lord, we hope, are constantly revolving in your hearts, teaching you, not only his will in proclaiming his gospel, but his meekness and perfect walk before all, even in those times of severe persecutions and abuse which were heaped upon him by a wicked and adulterous generation. Remember, brethren, that he has called you unto holiness; and need we say, to be like him in purity? How wise; how holy; how chaste; and how perfect; then, you ought to conduct yourselves in his sight; and remember, too, that his eyes are continually upon you. Viewing these facts in a proper light, you cannot be insensible; that without a strict observance of all his divine requirements, you may, at last, be found wanting; and if so, you will admit, that your lot will be cast among the unprofitable servants. We beseech you, therefore brethren, to improve upon all things committed to your charge, that you lose not your reward.

No doubt, the course which we pursued in our last to you, is yet familiar to your minds; that we there endeavored to show, as far as our limits would extend, the propriety, in part of adhering to the law of heaven; and also, the consistency in looking to heaven for a law or rule to serve us as a guide in this

present state of existence, that we may be prepared to meet that which inevitably awaits us, as well as all mankind. There is an importance, perhaps, attached to this subject, which the world has not as fully examined as the importance of it requires. Think for a moment, of the greatness of the Being who created the Universe; and ask, Could he be so inconsiderate with his own character, as to leave man without a law or rule to regulate his conduct, after placing him here, where, according to the formation of his nature he must in a short period sink into the dust?—Is there nothing further; is there no existence beyond this veil of death which is so suddenly to be cast over all of us? If there is, why not that Being who had power to place us here, inform us something hereafter? If we had power to place ourselves in this present existence, why not have power to know what shall follow when that dark veil is cast over our bodies? If in this life we receive our all; if when we crumble back to dust we are no more; from what source did we emanate, and what was the purpose in our existence? If this were all, we should be led to query, whether there was really any substance in existence; and we might with propriety say, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die!" If this were really so, then why this constant toiling, why this continual warfare, and why this unceasing trouble? But this is not the case, the voice of REASON, the language of INSPIRATION, and the Spirit of the living GOD, our Creator, teaches us, as we hold the record of truth in our hands, that this is not the case; that this is not so; for, the heavens declare the glory of a GOD, and the firmament shows his handy work; and a moment's reflection, is sufficient to teach every man of common intellect, that all these are not the mere production of chance; nor could they be supported by any power less than an Almighty hand; and he that can mark the power of Omnipotence inscribed upon the heavens, can also see His own hand-writing in the ordered volume; and he who reads it oftentimes will like it best, and he who is acquainted with it, will know the hand wherever he can see it; and when once discovered, it will not only receive an acknowledgment, but an obedience to all its heavenly precepts. For a moment reflect, what could have been the purpose in our Father in giving to us a law? Was it that it might be obeyed, or disobeyed? And think further too, not only the propriety, but the importance of attending to his laws in every particular. If, then, there is an importance in this respect, is there not a responsibility of great weight resting upon those who are called to declare these truths to men? Could we, or were we capable of laying any thing before you as a just comparison, we would cheerfully do it; but in this our capacity fails, and we are inclined to think, that man is unable, without an assistant beyond what has been given to them before, of expressing in words the greatness of this important office. We can only say, that if an anticipation of the joys of the celestial glory, as witnessed to the hearts of the humble is not sufficient, we will leave with yourselves the result of your own diligence; for God are long, will call off his servants before him, and there from His own hand they will receive a just recompense and a righteous reward for all their labors.

So much by way of introduction, and we shall proceed to examine still further the subject of law. However little may have been heretofore thought, or said upon the subject of law, does not diminish in the least the propriety nor the design of it, since it emanated from God; and though it may have been, and may be at this day a subject untouched by the professors of christianity, that does not lessen its value, neither does it diminish its power in judging men from their acting according to it, at the last day, those who have, or may have come to a knowledge of it. It may be supposed, and we think with a degree of propriety, that man had given him in the beginning, from the hand of his Maker, every necessary law and instruction, for his peace, happiness and future comfort: and if not living as he did in the immediate presence, and walking under the inspection of heaven, if he needed more, he could yet ask it, and that wise Hand which had formed him of the dust was sufficient; not only sufficient, but knowing all things, knew whether man needed more or not, and if he did, it would be bestowed. To suppose that the Maker of the universe never gave to man any law after he had formed him, would, in our opinion, be offering an insult to his glorious character, and be comparing him beneath, even an earthly parent! For where, we ask, is the kind human father to be found, who would, for any consideration whatever, suffer his children to grow up to manhood without giving them instruction, and instruction too, which would be wisely calculated to benefit them, even in riper years? Should he teach them virtue in their youth, (a principle too much neglected with most parents,) if observed in age it certainly would be virtue still; and the more it was observed the more honorable would be the gray hairs, until its spirit took its welcome exit to mingle with its kindred spirits, and rejoice in the salvation of that God from whom came the first principles of virtue. Should the great Author of our being, after he had made all things, and even man, and pronounced them all good, leave man without a law, we might well suppose that there was a contradiction in terms, indeed; for he had pronounced all things which he had made good, and yet there was no good in man, consequently he was not worthy to receive law whereby his conduct might be governed; but must be left without any principles or directions from the hand of his Maker to guide him in the least particular.

From these facts, in short, and the further knowledge contained in the Scriptures, it is reasonable to suppose, that man departed from the first teachings, or instructions which he received from heaven in the first age, and, blinded by his disobedience to be governed by them. Consequently, he formed such laws as best suited his own mind, or as he supposed best adapted to his situation. But that God has influenced man more or less since that time in the formation of law for his benefit, we have no hesitancy in believing; for, as before remarked, being the source of all good, every just and equitable law is a emanation of law, degree influenced by him. And should man in his own supposed wisdom, would not admit the influence of God, or of his own, for the wise and great purposes, for the good and

happiness of his creatures, God has instructed man to form wise and wholesome laws, since he had departed from him and refused to be governed by those laws which he had given by his own voice from on high in the beginning. But notwithstanding this transgression, by which man had cut himself off from an immediate intercourse with his Maker without a Mediator, it appears that the great and glorious plan of his redemption was previously meditated; the sacrifice prepared; the atonement wrought out in the mind and purpose of God, even in the person of the Son, through whom man was now to look for acceptance; and through whose merits he was now taught that he alone could find redemption, since the world had been pronounced, Unto dust thou shalt return!

But that man was not sufficient of himself to erect a system, or plan with power sufficient to free him from a destruction which awaited him, is evident from the fact, that God, as before remarked, prepared a sacrifice in the gift of his own Son, which should be sent in due time, in his own wisdom, to prepare a way, or open a door through which man might enter into his presence, from whence he had been cast for disobedience. From time to time these glad tidings were sounded in the ears of men in different ages of the world down to the time of his coming. By faith in this atonement or plan of redemption, Abel offered to God a sacrifice that was accepted, which was the firstlings of the flock. Cain offered of the fruit of the ground, and was not accepted, because he could not do it in faith: he could have no faith, or could not exercise faith contrary to the plan of heaven. It must be shedding the blood of the Only Begotten to atone for man; for this was the plan of redemption; and without the shedding of blood was no remission; and as the sacrifice was instituted for a type, by which man was to discern the great Sacrifice by which God had prepared to offer a sacrifice contrary to that, no faith could be exercised, because redemption was not purchased in that way, nor the power of atonement instituted after that order; consequently, Cain could have no faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. But Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God himself testifying of his gifts. Certainly, the shedding of the blood of a beast could be beneficial to no man, except it was done in imitation, or as a type, or explanation of what was to be effected through the gift of God himself; and this performance done with an eye looking forward in faith on the power of the great Sacrifice for a remission of sins. But however various may have been, and may be at the present time the opinions of man respecting the conduct of Abel, and the knowledge which he had on the subject of a sacrifice, it is evident in our minds, that he was instructed more fully into the plan than what the bible speaks; for how could he offer a sacrifice in faith, looking to God for a remission of his sins in the power of the great Atonement, without having been previously instructed into that plan? And, further, if he was accepted of God, what was the sacrifice performed further than the offering of the firstlings of the flock?

It is said by Paul in his letter to his Hebrew brethren, that Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. To whom did God testify of the gifts of Abel, was it to Paul? We have very little on this important subject in the forepart of the bible. But it is said, that Abel himself obtained witness that he was righteous.—Then certainly God spoke to him: indeed, it is said that God talked with him: and if he did, would he not, seeing he was righteous, deliver to him the whole plan of the gospel? And is not the gospel the news of redemption? How could Abel offer a sacrifice and look forward with faith on the Son of God for a remission of his sins, and not understand the gospel? The mere shedding the blood of hearts or offering any thing else in sacrifice, could not procure a remission of sins, except it were performed in faith of something to come, if it could, Cain's offering must have been as good as Abel's. And if Abel was taught of the coming of the Son of God, was he not taught of his ordinances? We all admit that the gospel has ordinances, and if so, had it not always ordinances, and were not its ordinances always the same? Perhaps, our friends will say, that the gospel and its ordinances were not known till the days of John the son of Zecharias, in the days of Herod the king of Judea. But we will here look at this point: For our own part, we cannot believe, that the ancients in all ages were so ignorant of the system of heaven as many suppose, since all that were ever saved, were saved through the power of this great plan of redemption, as much so before the coming of Christ as since: if not, God has had different plans in operation, (if we may so express it,) to bring men back to dwell with himself; and this we cannot believe, since there has been no change in the constitution of man since he fell; and the ordinances or institution of offering blood in sacrifice, was only designed to be performed till Christ was offered up and shed his blood, as said before, that man might look forward with faith to that time. It will be noticed that according to Paul, [see Gal. iii 8.] the gospel was preached to Abraham. We would like to be informed in what name the gospel was then preached, whether it was in the name of Christ or some other name. If in any other name, was it the gospel? And if it was the gospel, and that preached in the name of Christ, had it any ordinances? If not, was it the gospel? And if it had, what were they? Our friends may say, perhaps, that there were never any ordinances except those of offering sacrifices, before the coming of Christ, and that it could not be possible for the gospel to have been administered while the sacrifices of blood were. But we will recollect, that Abraham offered sacrifice, and notwithstanding this, had the gospel preached to him. That the offering of sacrifice was only to point the mind forward to Christ, we infer from these remarkable words of his to the Jews. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad. [See John viii 56.] So, then, because the ancients offered sacrifice it did not hinder their hearing the gospel; but served, as we said before, to open their eyes, and enabled them to look forward to the time of the coming of the Savior, and to rejoice in his redemption. We find also, that when the Israelites came out

of Egypt they had the gospel preached to them, according to Paul in his letter to the Hebrews, which says, For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but this word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. [See Heb. iv 2.] It is said again, in Gal. iii 19, that the law [of Moses, or the Levitical law] was added because of transgression. What, we ask, was this law added to, if it was not added to the gospel? It must be plain that it was added to the gospel, since we learn that they had the gospel preached to them. From these few facts, we conclude, that whenever the Lord revealed himself to men in ancient days, and commanded them to offer sacrifices to him, that it was done that they might look forward in faith to the time of his coming, and rely upon the power of that atonement for a remission of their sins. And this they have done, thousands who have gone before us, whose garments are spotless, and who are, like Job, waiting with an assurance like his, that they will see him in the *latter day* upon the earth, even in their flesh.

We may conclude, that though there were different dispensations, yet all things which God communicated to his people, were calculated to draw their minds to the great object, and to teach them to rely upon him alone as the author of their salvation, as contained in his law. From what we can draw from the scriptures relative to the teachings of heaven we are induced to think, that much instruction has been given to man since the beginning which we have not. This may not agree with the opinions of some of our friends, who are bold to say, that we have every thing written in the bible which God ever spake to men since the world began, and that if he had ever said any thing more we should certainly have received it. But we ask, does it remain for a people who never had faith enough to call down one scrap of revelation from heaven, and for all they have now, are indebted to the faith of another people who lived hundreds and thousands of years before them, to say how much God has spoken and how much he has not spoken? We have what we have, and the bible contains what it does contain; but to say that God never said any thing more to man than is there recorded, would be saying at once, that we have at last received a revelation; for it must be one to advance thus far, because it is so where said in that volume by the mouth of God, that he would not, after giving what is there contained, speak again; and if any man has found out that for a fact, he has ascertained it by an immediate revelation, other than has been previously written by the prophets and apostles. But through the kind providence of our father a portion of his word which he delivered to his ancient saints, has fallen into our hands, and they are presented to us with a promise of a reward if obeyed, and with a penalty if disobeyed; and that all are deeply interested in these laws, or teachings, must be admitted by all who acknowledge their divine authenticity.

It may be proper for us to notice in this place, a few of the many blessings held out in this law of heaven as a reward to those who obey its teachings. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, and